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VERSES

BY

J. M. K. SCHUMACHER.

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PREFACE.

Most of these verses have appeared in the *Indian Daily News*, and a few in the *Englishman* and the *Pioneer*.

J. M. K. S.

December, 1896.

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VERSES.

TO THE "RED ROAD."

(Rondeau.)

Red Road, I have a word to say,
A secret I would fain betray.
I envy you your happy prize
Of faces fair and dainty sighs—
Of fluttering hair and ribands gay.
What are the gods to whom you pray?
What gods are they whom you obey?—
For I would worship in such wise,
Red Road!

To-day she passed in sweet array,
Along your length of carriage-way;
And, ah! within her laughing eyes,
The light blue of September skies. . . .
Say truly, were you glad to-day,
Red Road?

LOQUITUR.

(Triolet.)

You said that you would,
And now—well, you won't.
Oh, pert womanhood,
You said that you would.
And yet, where's the good
If one should bemoan't ?
Yet you said that you would,
And now—well, you *won't.*

CHRISTMAS, 1895.

It is the Christmas morn of old,
  When angels sang the Saviour's birth,
And welcom'd with their harps of gold,
  Peace and goodwill return'd to earth.

Since then the years have roll'd apace,
  And brought their meed, their due to all,
Seen dear ones sicken face to face,
  Seen empires rise and kingdoms fall.

Till here to-day in this great land,
  By wave and hour divided far
From others joining hand in hand,
  Shines out for us this one bright star.

It is the Christmas morn of old,
  When angels sang the Saviour's birth,
And welcom'd with their harps of gold,
  Peace and goodwill to all on earth !

TO THE OLD YEAR.

With some short minutes still unsped,
I grope among the vanished.
Nor wake them with ungentle tread.

Eventful, uneventful days,
Each freighted with its empty praise,
Its random acts and long delays.

The search, in manner oft uncouth,
For Spirit, for Nature's self, for Truth
(Light words to juggle with, in sooth !).

Lo! thou that never gav'st me aught,
I render back what was not brought,—
Some foolish lessons idly taught,

Dregs of a rash experience drain'd
Unwittingly, and nothing gain'd,—
Things here far better unattain'd.

Alas ! too late to whine or rue,
To render back what was untrue,
'Tis what I *would*, but cannot do.

And thro' these softer thoughts there glows
A wav'ring fire the mind well knows,
A sympathy that comes and goes.

So, while thy last short moments creep,
Old friend but stern, these eyes must weep
Thee here forever sunk to sleep.

And with the word, the new day brings
The murmur of a thousand Springs,—
The rustle of Hope's golden wings !

TO THE NEW YEAR.

Ah, here by the side of my pillow so warm
You woke well clad for such a small form,
With a look that told of surprise.
And I, who had never seen vision so bright—
Seen vision so bright by day or by night—
Forbore to plunder and kiss you.
But whisper'd, while gazing into your glad eyes,
"What is it you've brought for me down from
the skies?—
You pert little rosy-cheek'd miss, you!"

A PASTORAL.

Fair Phyllis, heed these halting lines,
My Muse a chaplet for you twines.
For, was it not the other week
When first I gaz'd upon your cheek ?

I see you all demurely stand,
But when I bend to take your hand,
You draw it hastily from me,
And courtsey most provokingly.

And yet you know not, light and gay,
What mem'ries through my Fancy play,
Nor that your voice, your name, your air,
Recall a past that's more than fair.

You smile, you speak, you shyly gaze,
And straightway, o'er these latter days
With sorry commonplaces rife,
Rise glimpses of a rural life.

Thus ever, to my Fancy's eye,
In glitt'ring haste the stream runs by,
While some yet earlier Phyllis roves
The evening fields, the flower'd groves.

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

You say that you wish me to write "something nice,"
And I—well, I'd willingly do it,
If only I knew what you meant by that "nice;"
If only—if only—I knew it!

Now there's something I've long been wanting to say,
Which does not, perhaps, come below it:
So at last I feel I can tell you that I——
But I wonder, sweet, if you know it?

TO PHYLLIS.

(Rondeau.)

Sweet Phyllis, so sly and so shy,
And so charming from top to toe,
Will nothing your favour re-buy ?
Most cruel, most cruel, ah why ?—
Ah, why would you treat me so ?

With the smiles you on others bestow,
And your "no" and your "yes" and your "no,"
You leave me to cry and to sigh
"Sweet Phyllis."

Yet there's a something on which I rely,
A hope which I cannot forego,
So away ! with the sigh and the cry,
For you know, and you know, and you know
The time when you'll surely be my
Sweet Phyllis !

"AFTER THE BALL."

With Apologies.

This morning leaves me but to lie awake
And dream and ponder what the last hours bore,—
Last night, last night,—and of the dress you wore,
And all that bloom'd and blossom'd for your sake.
Forgive me, now, for aught that I may sing,
But if your beauty, coupled with much more,
Woke thoughts that had lain dormant heretofore,
There was in truth small room for wondering.

For Beauty leads sometimes a dangerous quest,
If only hope be moving at her arm,
And Hope to me had seldom prov'd more kind.
For while so near, so near that throbbing breast,
In other times held woman's chiefest charm,
Did you not whisper that——but, never mind.

STREET MUSIC.

After the days are ended,
After the goal is won,
After the gathering twilight,
After the set of sun—
Many a face will be wanting,
Many a faded rose ;
Many a rift in the music,
After the close.

After the years are over,
After the hours are done,
After the days are ended,
After the sands have run—
Will there be shadows moving,
Wak'd by the sound of tears ?
Will there be loves in the twilight
After the years ?

TRIOLETS.

I.

An exquisite dress,
And a Gainsbro' hat.
It was, I confess,
An exquisite dress.
The rest you will guess,
Should I tell you that—
'Twas an exquisite dress
And a Gainsbro' hat!

II.

Two dainty blue eyes,
That sparkle in play.
What witchery lies—
Two dainty blue eyes!
But if you are wise,
You'll keep far away
From two dainty blue eyes
That sparkle in play.

LINES ON MY NINETEENTH YEAR.

June 4th, 1896.

As one that wakes out of a waning dream
Sees evermore Dream's pageantries recede,
Fabric on fabric, with a footless speed,
Enwrapt about in wandering shadow and gleam,——
And stretches witless hands to things that seem,
And mutters ever, "Lo, in may sore need,
This thing shall come again ; indeed, indeed,
This thing shall come again ; for ever, I deem."
So fares it even with this one thing called Life,
Yet none shall wrestle with the silent years
That pass alike for widow and child and wife,——
Deaf to cajoleries, to beseechings blind ;
So fares it even with me, 'mid hopes and fears
Touching a hand to lov'd things left behind.

IF !

If she were not half so fair,
  And her eyes were not so blue,
And her smiles were not so rare,
  I should do as others do.—
If her eyes were not so blue,
I should do as others do.

I should never, never praise
  All that now I praise alway,
All her wonder, all her ways,
  All her beauty, day by day.
I should never, never praise
Half her dainty, woman's ways.

If she were not half so sweet,
  I should never care, I know ;
I should never once repeat
  That I loved, I loved her so.
If she were not half so sweet,
Half so sweet and half so meet.

But she is so sweet, so sweet,
  And I bow before her face ;
And I bend to kiss her feet,
  Doing worship for a space.
But she—she will never know
That I love, I love her so !

THE POET.

He sings of worlds we know not of :
  Engraven on no earthly chart
Are those fair worlds of his, whereof
  Our world is but a part.

Heedless of this our little day,
  New heavens lure him ; from afar.
He greets the sun upon his way,
  And every waiting star.

TO A CHILD'S QUESTION.

You ask me, and for you I write,
Just as may careless moods indite.
But, for the rest, I send you this
Knowing how very false it is.

I think Love is a little flower
That opens with the morning-hour;
But soon its petals close again,
Tir'd of the sun and rain.

I think Love is a little bird
That often times, without a word,
Flies off and hides within its nest:
A naughty little bird, at best!

I think Love is a little star
That twinkles, twinkles, very far;
But though it is so warm and bright,
It fades before the morning-light.

And if, child, I should here forego
My idle thinking, you must know,
Beyond all these and far above,
I really think—that Love is Love.

SONG.

Where'er she moves and lingers,
  Where'er she comes and goes,
The world is made of sunshine,
  And she is but a rose.

I pass without her garden
  Oft-times, and see her stand
A rose among the roses,
  With roses in her hand.

While each must do her homage,
  And all to her belong,
I gather up the fragrance
  And weave it into song.

So as she comes and passes,
  I wonder if she knows
The world made of sunshine
  And she is but a rose!

"THOSE TRUANT LIPS."

Those truant lips of yours to-day,
Lose nothing of their magic sway.
Though given sometimes to rebel
At secrets they are forced to tell.
Most charming of offenders, they!
And so within this roundelay,
I covet truly, if I may,
The power to buy, the power to quell,
Those truant lips.

For one, as neither grave nor gay,
I saunter forth upon life's way,—
Not all regardless of the spell,
Which women's voices weave so well,—
They hold much more than I can say,
Those truant lips!

WHAT HE SAID.

Just one short kiss,
Is all I ask.
Now, who would miss
Just one short kiss ?
Or reckon this
A heavy task ?—
Just *one* short kiss
Is all I ask.

(After.)

The archest kiss,
I do declare !
I would not miss,
The archest kiss,
For that or this,
For foul or fair.—
The archest kiss
You kissed, I swear !

THE QUEEN.

Thou who, in queenly wise, hast joy'd and wept,
  There, in thy halls—in thy fair halls and free,
  Thou at whose voice, thy people bend the knee,
Keeping the faith that they have ever kept.

Lo, now the envious years have overswept,
  This day of days a mighty monarchy :
  From shore to mountain and from sea to sea
Acclaim they name ; nor may aught intercept.

England now holds thee to her heart for praise,
  Thine England, holding none than thee more
    dear,
England, not all forgetful of her ways,
  Her days of all immortal glory—and we,
Touching in thought our hands across the sea,
  Mingle a while in her great voice of cheer.

23rd September, 1896.

EPIGRAMS.

Eager, and striving, wayward, strenuous blind,
Man moves about the world, and bides his week :
Seeking for ever what he shall not find,
Finding alone the thing he would not seek.

Into a world where noble feelings drown,
And life is full of hardness, cold, and dull,
Well was it God should send his angels down ;—
Woman, so womanly, so beautiful !

Slowly the sovereign sunset dies and dies,
Showing a slender moon against the skies,
And lamps are lighted. While—to other eyes—
This pallid sunset is a bright sunrise.

Man starts with hope : with joyous heart, elate ;
Knowing that all things come to those who wait.
Yet, all too soon, he cries, Too late, too late.—
This ! in a world where fate is Man; Man, Fate.

SONNET.

I know not if for me the heavy hours,
  Slow journeying, robed in blackest shroud, shall bring
  No other softness than that of the spring,
With light, and song, and sound of vernal showers

Or if, when as the last dread stormcloud lowers
  And all the heavens rise up in thundering,
  I shall perceive Death's cold and deadly sting
Strike through a heart and through a frame that cowers.

Yet, whatso'er may be to come, dear heart,
  I would but have thee steadfast to the end;
I would but have thee ready to depart.—
  Hearts must cease troubling, and the longest day
Wear to its close. So then, arise and say,
  In my last hour,—I have long sought thee, friend.

IN MEMORIAM. WILLIAM MORRIS.

October 3rd, 1896.

No greatly puissant voice was thine below,
Yet well we love thy pure and tender strain,
'Mid whose low voice—as at the lute's refrain—
Thy travellers sought the lands of long ago.
And now, to-day, in common mortal wise,—
Mute, helpless, heark'ning at the call of Death,—
With cold and folded hands, with bated breath,
Thou, too, hast wander'd to thy Paradise.
Fame holds her requiem o'er thy lasting sleep,
Love yearning stands, with heavy eyes that weep,
As one, whose only joy the gods despoil,
Arises at the touch of other days.
And, merged in her own everlasting toil,
The world moves onwards, with averted gaze.

SONG.

Lady, the song
The peerless stars are singing,
Doth but belong
To alien worlds and ways.—
Unnumber'd notes, in silver cadence ringing
Down the clear vault of Heaven, in God's high praise.
Lady, the song
Those fairer lips are singing,
Doth but belong
To earthly woes and ways.—
Yet well I know that even their softest singing,
Lingers for me more dear than any praise!

EPIGRAMS.

Man dreams of havens set in life's wide sea ;
And sees with placid joy the bright lights gleam.
But—because dreams are false, though myriad
—he
Wakens to find that it was but a dream.

'Tis all, I fear, a growing lust for gold :
Ye shall stretch suppliant hands until ye die.
Most just were it,—when all is bought and sold
If one should strive to parcel out God's sky.

I hold him blest beyond the common lot,
Who—life's small courtesies forgetting not—
Throughout his days, in spite of mock and shock,
All heedless stands, and firmly, as a rock.

Say what you will, in life we shall find pleasure,
Though pain should come with it in equal measure,
The heart, to-day, that's given up to sorrow,
Shall only beat more joyously to-morrow.

THE SINGER.

List to the sad-toned voice of the singer,
  Singing song of the loves that linger,
Surely sweeter was never heard—
  Voice of singer or voice of bird.

Yes; for long as the light doth linger,
  Memories come to the heart of the singer,
Rising and pulsing at every word—
  Memories into the music stirred.

A WOMAN'S HEART.

Your heart is like the heart of a rose is
  In the tender spring, when the flower uncloses,
But not as a rose, when its leaves are shaken,
  Is the fragrance lost, is the flower taken.

For, just from the ways of the world to shield it,
  Lest, at a touch, your thought should yield it,
God set over such a tender blossom,
  The fairy shield of your white, white bosom.

DAY TO DAY.

The morning breaks ; the sun re-takes
  His journey up the same old sky
With hurrying feet, with pauseless beat,
  The days go by, go by.

And as they go, 'tis well to know
  They are for ever passed away :
That in the end, to-day good friend,
  Means just the same as yesterday.

AT THE OPERA.

To "Josephine."

Take my heart, so you surrender
It, when wanted by the sender;
For to tell the truth, I lost it
Long before the play was out.

Never mind the why and wherefore,
You need give me nothing, therefore,
Only, let me say, of all things,
Don't forget to give it back!

TRIOLET.

Love is a snare,
For the willingest feet.
Yes ; I dare swear,
Love is a snare.
Were she never so fair,
I still should repeat
Love is a snare
For the willingest feet.

THE IDEAL.

As on an eve, when twilight calls
  Across the deeps where no one knows,
Lingering, the golden sunlight falls
  Athwart the sky's deep rose.

So in my dreamland, fast and fair,
  You come, you linger, for a space:
Ah! could you stay for ever there,
  With all your matchless grace!

TO——

I know not how it is, for me,
  The magic of your voice and eyes
Thrills into rapture ceaselessly,
  Like some slow music as it dies,—
Dies and forgets what hath been past
Because it could not always last.

I shall forget your voice, your eyes,
  Forget, perchance, how long ago
They changed the music of the skies
  Into the music that I know—
I shall forget you, dear, at last,
When Hope has fled and Love is past.

OF HIS LADY.

I have no song for singing
  Her gracefulness, her sweetness
For singing and for winging
  Her maidenly completeness.

I have no voice so tender
  As would suffice her praise :
And, therefore 'tis, I send her
  These boyish lays.

LOVE'S VAGARIES.

Sigh and smile at thought of parting,
Though the wound be newly smarting,
And the heart subdued with pleasure,
And you love beyond all measure.

Rest your head upon his shoulder,
With the touch of kisses colder,
Than their wont, within your tresses ;
And the warmth of new caresses.

Make it up with scores of kisses,
And be sure, dear maid, that this is
Just the way the whole world over ;
Love is such a daring rover !

Love one just a little longer,
Love one, while this love grow stronger,
Years and joy, and hope and laughter
And live happy ever after !

SONG.

If I ask'd you to remember
  What had been Love's last regret,
I would never think of chiding
  If, sweetheart, you should forget.

If you ask'd me to remember
  How Love came, when first we met,
Smilingly, with you for token,—
  How should I, sweetheart, forget ?

THE APOLOGY.

I may not ever think to touch your hand,
  Or love you once, or ever call you mine ;
But you perhaps, you too, will understand
  How it is one should worship at your shrine.

Your lovers will be other lovers far,
  And they shall sue for you with gifts and gold,
Though you will still remain for me a star,
  Whose beauty is the beauty I behold.

So let me pass once more upon life's way,
  Clasping within my heart one more ideal,
Because your image must remain alway,
  Too passionless, too sacred, to be real !

FLOWERS.

Flowers, pluck'd from the garden closes,
  Red and white, such delicate roses!
Fragrant alone and sweet for your sake,
  Dreaming of you before they awake.
(Dreaming of you for hours and hours,
  Because they were only tender flowers,)
Place them to rest within your bosom,
  Flower on flower, blossom on blossom!

THE GARDEN OF PLEASANCE.

I have made to myself a garden,
  Far from the confines of Day,
Lest the frost and the cold winds should harden ;
  My garden is far away.

There's the sound of a rivulet falling,
  And a bird, a bird, on the spray,
And I dream it is calling, calling,
  And singing to you alway.

So in my garden of pleasance,
  Move to the music I know,
And the flowers shall be filled with your presence,
  And spring shall forget to go.

SUNSET

In the west, the sun is burning,
  In a blaze of coloured light ;
In the west, the clouds are turning
  All their liveries into white.

Evening dies along the meadows,
  Night, at last, has come again ;
And our land, a land of shadows,
  Glimmers vast across the plain.

AT THE YEAR'S END.

He stands at the door and waits his due,
  A friend whom we love and know,
And he's been tender and kind and true
  And faithful as friends will go.

Though he hasn't exactly help'd me to rhyme
  Or help'd you to do your best,
He brought us as much as he could of his time,
  And left us to do the rest.

So he wasn't really a bad old year,
  And now that he's old and dumb,
Send him away with the lightest of cheer;—
  There are many more years to come!

TO——

What is it that I may write here?
  I have made you many songs,
Written them in your high honour:
  All my work to you belongs.

Be my verse, or trite, or foolish,
  Boyish whim, or aught beside,
You will read it, as it is, dear,
  You, at least, will never chide.

CORRIGENDA.

Page 18, line 6, *for* "may" *read* "my."
„ 21, line 2, *for* "may" *read* "my."
„ 25, line 8, *for* "they" *read* "thy."

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